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PRESS RELEASE

**WOMAN ACCUSED IN FRAUD SCAM TARGETING ELDERLY VICTIMS
WITH PROMISED INHERITANCE**

United States Attorney Colm F. Connolly announced today that Victoria Crosby, 33, of Atlantic City, New Jersey was indicted on twenty-one (21) counts of mail and wire fraud by the Grand Jury for the District of Delaware on October 13, 2005. Ms. Crosby was originally indicted in June 2005 on separate charges stemming from a portion of the same fraud scheme. U.S. Magistrate Judge Mary Pat Thyngne detained the defendant pending trial as a risk of flight.

According to the Superseding Indictment, between October 2003 and June 2005, Crosby defrauded elderly victims living in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and California out of thousands of dollars in cash in a series of complex mail and wire fraud schemes. CROSBY initially contacted potential victims by telephone. During these calls, CROSBY, using a fictitious name, posed as a employee of an executive or judicial branch of the state or federal government, and/or as a representative of an insurance company or law firm. CROSBY told the victims that they had inherited real or personal property left to them by a deceased relative, describing the property as, among other things, the proceeds of an insurance policy or residential real property (for example, a home). In fact, the victims had not inherited the property described, and the property itself was fictitious.

According to the Superseding Indictment, CROSBY told the victims that the inherited property would be turned over to them as soon as certain payments were made. The payments, often for thousands of dollars, allegedly were due to pay back taxes and other administrative expenses. Once the victims agreed to send money, CROSBY instructed the victims how to obtain the funds and where to send them. This instruction included assisting victims in contacting banks to withdraw currency, contacting Western Union to wire transfer funds, and contacting credit card companies, for the purpose of acquiring credit cards in the victims' names and cash

advances on credit cards. CROSBY also told the victims to send packages containing cash and credit cards via Federal Express and United Parcel Service to various addresses chosen by her. Many of the packages were sent to motels in Philadelphia, New York, and Delaware. In a number of cases, CROSBY picked up the packages. Once the victims sent their money and started inquiring about how the inherited property would be transferred, all contact between the victims and CROSBY ceased.

U.S. Attorney Connolly said of the case: "Those who commit fraud against the elderly abuse some of our community's most vulnerable members. The fraud alleged here targets senior citizens under the auspices of federal and state agencies and plays upon the trust the public places in our government. These fraud schemes frequently go unreported because when victims realize they have been scammed, they are often too embarrassed to seek help from law enforcement. If anyone is contacted by someone claiming to be a representative of the government, do not send money before independently corroborating the claim."

The case is being investigated by Special Agent Scott Duffey and Taskforce Officer Robert Kracyla of the Wilmington Resident Agency of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as Postal Inspectors with the United States Postal Inspection Service in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the Upper Merion Township (Pennsylvania) Police Department. Law enforcement officers with the Delaware State Police, Social Security Administration-Philadelphia,- Postal Inspection Service -Cleveland, Ohio, the United States Secret Service of Wilmington, Delaware and Atlantic City, New Jersey, Philadelphia Police Department, Atlantic City New Jersey Police Department, Massillon Ohio Police Department, Pasadena California Police Department, and Redondo Beach California Police Department also have assisted in the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Shannon Hanson is prosecuting the case.

If convicted, Crosby faces a maximum sentence of 20 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine for each count.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is only an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

For additional information, please contact Public Information Officer Kimberlyn Reeves at 302-573-6277, ext. 146.